

NOVEMBER 18, 1976

MIDEAST PEACE PROSPECTS BRIGHTER

ANNCR: NEWS ANALYST FRED GALVAN SEES SEVERAL RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AS JUSTIFYING SOME HOPES THAT PEACE PROSPECTS THERE ARE IMPROVING.

VOICE: IN LEBANON, THE ARAB PEACE-KEEPING FORCE, SPEARHEADED BY SYRIAN TROOPS, IS DAILY MAKING ITS PRESENCE FELT MORE AND MORE-- AND DAILY THE PRECARIOUS PEACE THAT HAS DESCENDED ON THE WAR-TORN COUNTRY GAINS IMPETUS. PRESIDENT SARKIS HAS TAKEN THE FIRST STEPS TO NORMALIZE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS. AND THE INITIAL SUCCESS OF THE ARAB LEAGUE CONTINGENTS IN BACKING UP THOSE EFFORTS HAS BROUGHT EGYPT, SYRIA AND SAUDI ARABIA CLOSER TOGETHER AS PARTNERS IN THE PEACE-KEEPING ENTERPRISE -- THUS, AT LEAST FOR NOW ENDING THE ESTRANGEMENT BETWEEN CAIRO AND DAMASCUS THAT HAMPERED MIDDLE EAST PEACE EFFORTS EARLIER THIS YEAR.

ELSEWHERE, PRESIDENT SADAT OF EGYPT HAS TOLD VISITING CONGRESSMEN IN CAIRO ON SEVERAL RECENT OCCASIONS THAT HE IS WILLING TO SIGN A PEACE AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL NOW. AND IN ISRAEL, PRIME MINISTER RABIN HAS SAID HE IS WILLING TO MEET WITH PRESIDENT SADAT ANYWHERE, ANYTIME IF HIS OFFERS OF PEACE ARE SINCERE.

UNQUESTIONABLY, THE BITTER LESSONS OF HISTORY IN THE MIDDLE EAST ARE MAKING THEIR IMPACT FELT ON THE PARTICIPANTS. IN OTHER WORDS, THE REALITIES OF TODAY'S WORLD HAVE DEMONSTRATED TO THE ARAB AND ISRAELI CONTENDERS THAT NEITHER SIDE CAN IMPOSE ITS PROGRAM ON THE OTHER, IF A STABLE PEACE IS EVER TO EMERGE IN THEIR PART OF THE WORLD.

TO FRIENDS OF BOTH SIDES THE NEW REALISM THAT CAIRO, DAMASCUS AND TEL AVIV ARE DISPLAYING IS MORE THAN AN ENCOURAGING SIGN--IT SUGGESTS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GETTING OVER-ALL PEACE EFFORTS UNDERWAY AGAIN SOON. SECRETARY KISSINGER, IN HIS SPEECH TO NORTH

ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION LEGISLATORS IN WILLIAMSBURG THIS WEEK REFLECTED THAT WASHINGTON VIEW. HE SAID: "WE BELIEVE OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS FOR PROGRESS TOWARDS PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST ARE BETTER NOW THAN THEY HAVE BEEN PERHAPS AT ANY TIME SINCE THE CREATION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL." AND HE ADDED THAT THE EASING OF SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN TENSIONS MAY CREATE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH HEADWAY CAN BE MADE TOWARD PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

BUT DESPITE THE MORE RECEPTIVE MOOD BOTH SIDES ARE DISPLAYING, THEIR POSITIONS HAVE ALTERED LITTLE. EGYPT STILL CALLS FOR CREATION OF A PALESTINIAN STATE IN THE GAZA STRIP AND THE WEST SIDE OF THE JORDAN AND TOTAL WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAEL FROM ARAB TERRITORY CAPTURED IN 1967. ISRAEL INSISTS ON NEGOTIATING THESE ISSUES WITHOUT PRE-CONDITIONS. ISRAEL, MISTER RABIN SAID, "WILL NOT DISREGARD ANY WORDS OF PEACE UTTERED BY ANY ARAB LEADER BUT WILL JUDGE THEM BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH HE IS PREPARED TO ENTER NEGOTIATIONS."

THE IMPORTANT THING IN ALL THIS IS THAT BOTH SIDES NOW FEEL THAT TALK OF NEW NEGOTIATIONS IS IN ORDER AT THIS TIME. WHAT IS NEEDED NOW IS POSITIVE ACTION BY BOTH SIDES TO SUIT THEIR WORDS.

PCA/FFG